

Thursday, March 4, 1999

## NASA spacecraft launch from VAFB postponed until March 4 at earliest



## Robotic contest at KSC begins March 4 at Visitor Complex

▲ The launch of NASA's Wide-Field Infrared Explorer (WIRE) spacecraft aboard an Orbital Sciences Pegasus XL vehicle was postponed earlier this week. **The new launch date is no earlier than March 4.** Orbital Sciences engineers are troubleshooting the mechanism which secures the rudder pin on the Pegasus rocket and the device which retracts the pin for flight. The Pegasus is to be dropped from an L-1011 aircraft over the Pacific Ocean approximately 100 miles offshore from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. The WIRE spacecraft will help astrophysicists understand the formation and evolution of "starburst" galaxies, which may represent the main source of stars in the universe.

▲ **The FIRST regional robotics competition kicks off Thursday, March 4,** at noon with practice rounds. The qualifying matches begin 9 a.m. Friday, March 5, in the Visitor Complex Rocket Garden. Brevard County high schools taking part in the event are Titusville, Astronaut, Cocoa Beach, Merritt Island, Rockledge and Satellite Beach. Many KSC employees, local businesses, and organizations have been involved with the teams. The public is invited to attend any or all rounds and matches.

◆ The Space Coast section of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) is holding its **First Annual Women's History Month Dinner** on Thursday, **March 25**, at the Jamaica Room, Radisson Resort in Cape Canaveral. Along with a formal dinner, a panel session will present special guests from three different professional fields. The event is intended to support a variety of professions, not just engineering. The cost is \$20. For reservations, please call Brenda S. Fuentes at 407-867-1185, or e-mail her at [Brenda.S.Fuentes@jbsoc.ksc.nasa.gov](mailto:Brenda.S.Fuentes@jbsoc.ksc.nasa.gov) before March 11. Corporate tables are welcome (1 table = 10 seats, \$20 per individual).

◆ **Hurricane/Storm Predictions:** Dr. William Gray of Colorado State University has made the following hurricane predictions for 1999: Named Storms – 14, Named Storm Days – 65, Hurricanes – 9, Hurricane Days – 40, Intense Hurricanes – 4, Intense Hurricane Days – 10. The frequency and intensity is higher than the 40-year average from 1950 to 1990. The Brownsville-to-Houston, Tex., area is the most likely target, followed by the area between Fort Pierce and Key West, Fla. Seen at the right is Hurricane Elena, with wind speeds in excess of 110 miles per hour, photographed from STS-51I, in the Gulf of Mexico on Sept. 1, 1985. It's not too early to start thinking about planning for the new season.



◆ **Did You Know?** Employees who wish to receive the latest edition of each KSC Countdown via e-mail, for personal use or distribution to staff, can send their request to the e-mail address below.

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